and thereafter in the Standing Committee of some Union Ministers and Chief Ministers which was set up pursuant to the recommendations made in the Conference of Chief Ministers. The Standing Committee has suggested that the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 may continue as an umbrella legislation for the Centre and the States to use when needed, but a progressive dismantling of controls and restrictions was also required.

Pakistan's objection to Indo-Israel cooperation

2697. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have noticed that Pakistan has objected to defence cooperation between India and Israel;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) what has been Israel's response to Pakistan's objection?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Pakistani officials have, from time to time, sought to make propagandist statements about the nature of the legitimate cooperation between India and Israel which is based on national interest and sovereign decision making in both countries. India determines the nature of its relations with other countries solely on the basis of its supreme national interest.

Consulate of Gulf Countries in Kerala

2698. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to start a consulate of Gulf countries in Kerala is pending;

(b) whether any representation/demand for the same has been received from Kerala; and

(c) The details in this regard and Governments reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No, Sir.